

**ADDENDUM TO THE
CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICE INVESTIGATION STANDARDS**

Issued June 25, 2004

REFERRAL OF YOUNG CHILDREN TO THE BIRTH-TO-3 PROGRAM

Purpose: To connect infants and toddlers who have delayed development or have a physical or mental condition which is likely to result in delayed development to the local Birth-to-3 Program for screening, evaluation, and intervention services. Areas of delay may include cognitive development, physical development (fine motor, gross motor, or vision/hearing), speech, language and communication development, social and emotional development, and adaptive behavior and self-help development.

Applicability of the Policy:

This policy applies to all children less than three years of age who are substantiated as having been abused or neglected after June 25, 2004.

Policy:

The policy for referral to the Birth-to-3 Program varies, depending upon whether the maltreatment was committed by a primary caregiver, as defined under s. 48.981(1)(am), Stats., by a secondary caregiver or non-caregiver, and whether the child is in out-of-home care.

Maltreatment by Secondary Caregivers or Non-Caregivers

In cases where a child less than three years of age has been substantiated as having been abused or neglected by a person other than a primary caregiver, CPS will do the following:

- Explain the Birth-to-3 Program to the parents and how these services can benefit their child and family. Give the family written information about the program, including how they can request a screening.
- Advise the parents that it is their decision as to whether they contact the Birth-to-3 Program to request a screening.
- If the parents are interested in the Birth-to-3 Program and request the CPS caseworker to assist with making the referral, it is recommended that the CPS caseworker make the referral with a parent present, so that the parent is part of the referral process. Obtain consent for release of information to the Birth-to-3 Program from the parent so that there is no confusion about the CPS caseworker's intent to share confidential information with the Birth-to-3 Program as part of making the referral.
- Document all actions related to providing Birth-to-3 Program information to the family in the case record.

Maltreatment by Primary Caregivers

In cases where a child less than three years of age has been substantiated as having been abused or neglected by a primary caregiver and the child is not in out-of-home care, the CPS agency will do the following:

- Explain to the parents the federal requirement to refer such children to the Birth-to-3 Program for consideration of eligibility for services, the purpose of such a referral, and how the services of the program can benefit their child and their family.
- Request a signed consent for release of information to the Birth-to-3 Program from the parent. This is important in order to engage the family in the change process and in meeting the needs of their children. It is also important in order to establish a respectful working relationship with the parent that supports his or her involvement in case planning and maximizes the potential for successful outcomes for the child.
- If the parent signs the consent, contact the Birth-to-3 Program coordinator and discuss the child's functioning and any ongoing conditions that the child has been experiencing that can impact functioning to determine whether there are any indications that a Birth-to-3 Program screening might identify developmental lags.

If the Birth-to-3 Program coordinator believes further screening is indicated, share the family contact information with the Birth-to-3 Program and advise the parent that he or she will be contacted.

- If the parent will not give consent to release information to the Birth-to-3 Program, advise the parent that a referral must be made, but that the parent is not required to accept Birth-to-3 Program services. It is recommended that under these circumstances only demographic and contact information be shared with the Birth-to-3 Program, and not confidential behavioral or family history information from the case record. CPS agencies are encouraged to develop policies with the local Birth-to-3 Program addressing the information that will be shared when a family does not sign a consent to release information. [Note: Sec. 48.981(7)(a)2. or s.48.981(7)(a)17. may give authority in some cases or under some circumstances to share case record information.]
- For cases opened for ongoing services, consider how the Birth-to-3 Program services may be integrated into the case plan. [Note: The standardized General Desired Outcomes in the Wisconsin Model and WiSACWIS include the outcomes of "Child demonstrates age-appropriate development" and "Parent provides age/developmentally appropriate guidance/limits."]

Children in Out-of-Home Care

In cases where a child less than three years of age has been substantiated as having been abused or neglected and the child is in out-of-home care or has just been placed in out-of-home care, the CPS agency will do the following:

- Make the referral to the Birth-to-3 Program. If the child has been placed outside of the placing agency's county, the referral is still made to the Birth-to-3 Program in the placing agency's county.
- Advise the caregiver and the parents of the referral, the reason for the referral, and that the Birth-to-3 Program will be contacting them to discuss the child's functioning and set up an evaluation, if indicated.

- Work with the Birth-to-3 Program to assure that all parties (Birth to 3 Program staff, CPS staff, caregivers and parents) have the information needed to fulfill their responsibilities, to make decisions and to make the best use of available services throughout the case process.
- Consider how the Birth-to-3 Program services may be integrated into the case plan and permanency plan. [Note: The standardized General Desired Outcomes in the Wisconsin Model and WiSACWIS include the outcomes of “Child demonstrates age-appropriate development” and “Parent provides age/developmentally appropriate guidance/limits.”]

In all cases where a child less than three years of age has been substantiated as having been abused or neglected, the following applies:

- The referral to the Birth-to-3 Program need not to be in writing. However, the local CPS Program and Birth-to-3 Program may jointly develop policy that requires a formal written referral.
- The Birth-to-3 Program, when it receives a referral, will determine what type of assessment is appropriate as well as what type of services to offer.
- The CPS agency caseworker will document in the record all activities associated with the referral to and ongoing coordination with the Birth-to-3 Program.

CPS agencies are encouraged to expand communication with the local Birth-to-3 Program to enhance understanding of each other’s services, policies, procedures, responsibilities and restrictions. CPS agencies are also encouraged to develop additional policies or procedures with the local Birth-to-3 Program to facilitate the referral process, enhance communication, and ensure service coordination on behalf of the family.